


Braille Monitor



JANUARY, 1981

VOICE OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND



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THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

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THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

KENNETH JERNIGAN, *President*

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BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21230

LETTERS FOR THE PRESIDENT, ADDRESS CHANGES,
SUBSCRIPTION REQUESTS, AND ORDERS FOR NFB LITERATURE,
ARTICLES FOR THE MONITOR AND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
SHOULD BE SENT TO THE NATIONAL OFFICE

* * *

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KANSAS CITY, KANSAS 66111

* * *

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* * *

THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND IS NOT AN ORGANIZATION
SPEAKING FOR THE BLIND—IT IS THE BLIND SPEAKING FOR THEMSELVES

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BILL GALLAGHER APPOINTED AS DIRECTOR OF AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND

The American Foundation for the Blind was established in 1921. During the early years it did a number of things which were constructive and helped improve the lives of the blind. For instance, it played a major part in developing the Talking Book program for the blind, and it did research to devise new aids and appliances.

From the very beginning, the Foundation claimed more credit than it deserved and overestimated the contributions it made. It exploited the name of Helen Keller and extracted every dime it could from wealthy donors and the general public for every small device it invented or slightest service which it rendered. Regardless of all of this, there was a mixture of positive and negative, good and bad.

However, in recent years the American Foundation for the Blind has become so reactionary and repressive that it is now probably the greatest obstacle to advancement which the blind face. It has tried by money and the use of raw, naked power to control the lives of the blind and to dominate every other agency and organization in the field. It has given us NAC (the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped), which has fostered dissension, hostility, and hatred—not to mention opposing actions which would lead to accountability and quality services to the blind. In other words, what began as “the American Foundation *for* the Blind” has now become “the American Foundation *against* the Blind.”

For the past five years Eugene Apple has served as the Director of the Foundation. Personally he does not seem to be a vicious or bad individual, but he has been so bland

(such a nonentity) that he has been the instrument for almost every imaginable kind of unethical and unprofessional conduct—conduct which has emanated from the real powers at the Foundation, the behind-the-scenes bosses. Some of those bosses have been on the Foundation’s board of directors. Some of them have been connected with NAC; one of them has certainly been NAC’s Director, Dick Bleecker. But one of them (a true “behind-the-scenes” man, a back-room policy-maker and influence peddler) has been Bill Gallagher.

Although Bill Gallagher is blind himself, he is no friend of blind people—no champion of progressive thought or increased rights or greater civil liberties. He is a “hard-liner.” When Gene Apple first became director of the Foundation, he seldom went anywhere alone. Bill Gallagher was usually with him—ever present at his elbow, calling the shots and telling him what to do. There were many who felt that (from the staff side of things) Gallagher was the real master at the Foundation from a time even earlier than Apple’s arrival. Certainly somebody has been calling the shots and setting the policies for the past few years—and it is hard to believe that that somebody has been Gene Apple. He is not tough enough. He is not mean enough. He is not callous enough.

When the NAC-American Foundation power brokers decided last spring that Gene Apple was too soft to carry on the war which they wished to wage against the blind, they permitted him to “resign.” He was going back to graduate school, they said—to “complete additional studies.” Never mind that his job was one of the plushest and highest paid positions in the

field of work with the blind and that the "graduate school" routine was unbelievable to the point of the ridiculous. They said it with a straight face, and the Foundation supporters dutifully echoed the party line.

As Federationists will remember, we knew several weeks in advance that the firing (excuse the slip—the "resignation") was to occur. Apple announced his "resignation" on a Friday. The following Monday, Ralph Sanders described in detail to Joe Larkin and other higher ups in the NAC-American Foundation combine the goings on at the Foundation the Friday before. To say the least, they were upset. They made threats, promising personal and professional ruin to NFB leaders. Their actions confirmed what we had already known—that the Foundation-NAC group is desperate, determined to use its money and connections, and willing to do anything they can think of to try to stop the growing influence of the organized blind movement.

In this context we waited through the summer to see who the NAC-Foundation bosses would pick to spearhead their war against the blind—in other words, to be director of the American Foundation for the Blind. The decision has now been made, and the news is out. It is none other than Bill Gallagher himself.

During the back-room maneuvering which preceded the selection and announcement, not all was heavy or without humor. There were lighter moments. There was, for instance, the call which the professional talent scouts hired by the Foundation board made to our own Second Vice President, Rami Rabby. Unfamiliar with the ins and outs of the field and the various personalities involved, they asked Rami whether he might be interested in applying

for the job. Of course, he set them straight, and the charade went on.

In a Press Release dated September 23, 1980, John S. Crowley, who is President of the American Foundation for the Blind, made the momentous announcement. William Gallagher would be the new Director. There are those who say that none of the others who were approached would take the job, but this cannot be confirmed. Be this as it may, William Gallagher is the man, and he is no friend of the blind. We can expect from him only hatred and hostility—no reform, no attempt at accommodation or understanding, and no recognition of the legitimate aspirations and rights of the blind. Mr. Crowley's Press Release paints a glowing picture of Gallagher and makes a number of unsupportable, self-serving declarations about the role and function of the American Foundation for the Blind. But the Foundation is still the same old Foundation, and Bill Gallagher is still the same old Bill Gallagher. The slick words of the Press Release will not change the hard facts of the battle which the blind must continue to fight for freedom and first-class citizenship. In this context and against this background, the Press Release has a distinctly unpleasant tone. Here it is in full:

American Foundation for the Blind
September 23, 1980

For Immediate Release:

William F. Gallagher, former Associate Director for Advocacy, has been named Executive Director of the American Foundation for the Blind effective immediately, John S. Crowley, President, announced today.

Mr. Gallagher succeeds Loyal Eugene Apple who resigned this Summer, after five years in that position, to pursue graduate

studies at the University of North Carolina.

In making the announcement, Mr. Crowley stated, "Mr. Gallagher brings to this post an extensive range of experience and unique personal stature which has gained him unmatched support in the blindness field."

The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) is the major national consultative organization in work for the blind in the United States. Headquarters are at 15 West 16th Street in New York City and regional offices are maintained in San Francisco, Denver, Chicago, Atlanta and Washington, D.C.

As Associate Director for Advocacy, Mr. Gallagher, 57, was responsible for the Field Services Department, Publications and Information Services Department, Governmental Relations and Public Relations Departments, as well as the Office of the Coordinator of Conferences, Workshops and Training Sessions.

Mr. Gallagher, who has served in the field of the blind for 26 years, including 8 years with the Foundation, was previously Director of AFB's Program Planning Department. He also served as Director of Rehabilitation Services at the New York Association for the Blind (The Light-house); Assistant Director and Director of the Rehabilitation Center at the Greater Pittsburgh Guild for the Blind; Chief of Professional Services at the Catholic Guild for All the Blind, Newton, Massachusetts; Supervisor of Social Services, St. Paul's Rehabilitation Center for the Newly Blinded, Catholic Guild for All the Blind; and Acting Supervisor and Social Worker at the Children's Welfare Division in Boston, Mass.

Born in Maynard, Mass., Mr. Gallagher was blinded by disease at the age of 15.

He received a Master's Degree in Social Work from Boston College in 1950,

and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Sociology from Holy Cross College in 1948. While at Holy Cross, Mr. Gallagher was Vice President of his class, a member of the Jesuit Honor Society, President of the Purple Key Society, Student Manager of the Championship Basketball Team of 1947, a member of the Dramatic Club and a member of the Debating Society.

He was graduated from Perkins School for the Blind, Watertown, Mass. in June 1945. While at Perkins, he was President of the Student Council, President of the Athletic Association, Captain of the Wrestling Team, and member of the Drama Society and the Debating Society.

Appointed by Governor Hugh Carey, he serves on the Board of the New York State Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped. He is the National Treasurer of the American Association of Workers for the Blind (AAWB) and is President of the New York State Chapter of the AAWB.

From 1962 to 1965, Mr. Gallagher was an Instructor in the Graduate Program in Special Education at the University of Pittsburgh. He has been a Guest Lecturer at numerous universities including Cornell University's School of Nursing from 1972 to 1979.

His publications include contributions to "Visual Impairment," Volume Ten, *Rehabilitation and Medicine*, Physical Medicine Library, and "Social Work Among Blind Persons," *Social and Rehabilitation Services for the Blind*, published by Charles C. Thomas, 1972. He also edited *Guidelines on the Selection, Training, and Placement of Qualified Blind Teachers in Teaching Positions at the Elementary and Secondary Levels of Public School Systems*, published by the New York Association for the Blind, New York, New York 1969. He has also written a number of papers that have been published in professional journals.

Mr. Gallagher resides in New York City with his wife, the former Catherine Theresa O'Brien. Mrs. Gallagher is an Associate

Professor at the Borough of Manhattan Community College, City University of New York.

ANOTHER VICTORY AGAINST DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT: THE AL SAILE CASE

by JAMES CASHEL

Unlike discrimination based on race, sex, national origin, or religion, which usually takes the form of some open and outright prejudicial action, discrimination against the blind in employment is often more subtle and covert. The discrimination practiced against Al Saile (who is a long-time Federationist and who has been employed for many years) is a case in point, illustrating our long and painful struggle to achieve first-class citizenship.

Al Saile is a well trained and highly qualified labor economist, currently assigned to the Labor Department's Employment and Training Administration. He has worked in various capacities at the Department of Labor for nearly 15 years. During this time it would be hard to isolate any single or especially significant incident which, in and of itself, would give rise to a claim of discrimination, but despite this Al Saile has been victimized by one of the most cruel, yet indirect, forms of prejudicial treatment. The type of discrimination practiced against Al Saile is one of the more typical forms of mistreatment of qualified blind employees wherein denial of opportunity is a gradual process which can only be perceived upon viewing a series of incidents over an extended period of time.

The discriminatory treatment in this case was a pattern of behavior adopted by supervisors which prevented Al Saile from demonstrating his professional skills, thereby placing him at a serious disad-

vantage in competition with others for promotions. The result was that, while sighted employees were given the assignments and tasks necessary to prove themselves and to build a record of competent performance, Al Saile was systematically denied these opportunities, falling victim to his employer's presumption that "he would not be able to do the work anyway."

This is the age-old situation in which a blind person is protected by someone else (in this case supervisors on the job) from what is thought to be inevitable failure, should the opportunity be extended. The problem with this quite familiar and typical practice of protecting the blind is, of course, that while extending the almost maternal hand of custodial care for the welfare and safety of the blind person, the self-appointed protector is also foreclosing any possibility of success. Making the situation even worse, this custodial treatment is usually extended with the best of intentions and the desire to prevent the blind person from suffering the pain of failure.

This is exactly the problem which Al Saile lived with for the majority of his 14 years of employment at the Department of Labor. It wasn't that people didn't like him or that they would leave the room and make rude remarks whenever he came around—quite the opposite. Almost everybody was, for the most part, congenial and good tempered. But the problem was really much more basic and subtle; behind

the facade of kindness and goodwill toward Mr. Saile, there was the deep-seated feeling that a blind person (any blind person) was simply not cut out to be a labor economist. So year after year Al Saile suffered this undeserved sentence of inevitable doom. Sometimes he was given assignments which were well beneath his capacity, but more often he was passed over even for the most simple and menial jobs, being left to sit idle as though the government could well afford to hire a token blind person, thereby being proud that it was meeting its obligation to employ the handicapped.

There are undoubtedly hundreds, perhaps thousands, of blind persons who are trapped by their employers in exactly the same situation, but the success of Al Saile's long struggle to break loose from the bonds of deeply rooted prejudice should give hope and encouragement that the traditional barriers of discrimination have at last begun to crumble. Reprinted below is an

article from the July 28, 1980, issue of *Federal Times*, a newspaper printed for federal employees. In the section entitled "Forum," Al Saile describes in his own words his situation. On September 11, 1980, Mr. Robert L. Davis, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management at the Department of Labor, announced the Department's proposed disposition of Al Saile's grievance. The decision represents a victory for Al Saile and for all of us; it came in the form of a letter which we are including in this article because of its significance. Victories such as this are made of hard work, tenacious determination, and the realization that we can best achieve our common objectives by organizing with one another. Al Saile exhibits each of these characteristics, and because of this the decision in his case will go down as a ringing declaration of equal rights and another victory for the National Federation of the Blind.

FORUM

Affirmative Action Doesn't Exist for the Blind

by ALVIN SAILE

(From the *Federal Times*, July 28, 1980.)

For the past 14 years, I have been employed as a labor economist or in other related jobs in the Employment and Training Administration of the Department of Labor at the same grade.

Legally blind until late 1971, and totally blind since, I have encountered continuous discrimination by office chiefs and top management in the recognition of my abilities to perform all the tasks specified in my position descriptions.

Many remarks reflect the prevailing attitude that no blind person can perform complex duties involved in research assignments of the office in which I have been

employed. Nor was any effort made to reassign me to what management thought could be more suitable work. The little work I did do was generally considered of good quality, but never had any practical purpose.

Unhappy with my situation, and unable to gain union support, I directed my efforts to seek competitive jobs as they were posted. For the first few years, because both my resume and my performance evaluation included remarks about my blindness, I never made the highly qualified rating from panels. By removing these references to blindness, I was able to seek, over the past five years, nearly 80 inter-

views for which I had been found highly qualified.

The negative attitude about blindness surfaced in these interviews with such comments as: "How do you function? How did you find this room? It's so marvelous what blind people can do."

I was in competition for jobs in which minorities and females were granted preferential selection by my agency and I have heard the remark, "I can promote your guide dog because she is black and female, but management knows nothing about affirmative action for the handicapped because there are so few employed and top management gets no pressure to recognize advancement rights for the handicapped as is applied for minorities and females."

In late 1978, I went for an interview with a person who knew my work previously done in the research speciality that he directs, and who thus accepted my capabilities. However, he warned he might not have hiring authority, since the overall office director had some concerns over the position. It was well-known the office director in the past had a say on who was selected and he was one of the persons who believed that due to lack of sight, my work was not competitive.

Upon being turned down for this position, I filed an equal employment opportunity complaint. Before this action, I had brought my situation to the attention of the American Civil Liberties Union, with the support of the National Federation of the Blind, to seek possible court remedy. The complaint was based on advancement denials and the inadequacies of my work assignments due to my blindness.

In May 1980, one year after this case had been initiated (my report had been lost twice) a meeting was held with the equal employment opportunity officer of Labor's Employment and Training Administration

for resolution. Present were Marc Maurer, representing the National Federation of the Blind, Patrick Norton, representing ACLU from the law firm of Covington and Burling, and myself. Selecting officials, we were informed, had the right to *choose* from among the applicants interviewed.

There was no answer from the EEO official when asked how over the past decade minorities and females settled claims of discrimination when they were not chosen, yet it is well-known that within ETA such persons must be given preferential selection and if not chosen, the selecting official must document the reasons why to top management. As expected, management continues to ignore the Vocational Rehabilitation amendments of 1973 which in intent, provide for the handicapped the same consideration for preferential selection.

Management conceded that I had, indeed, not been given enough work since my total blindness and the reason was based upon the belief that I could not perform the duties of my grade because of lack of sight. Yet, management did not have to atone for this prolonged mistaken view. The case was resolved this way: I have to prove that I can do all the tasks while management sets about to prove that I will fail. And this is not to be done in my present job. A new job will be created, setting me aside from my work background, and I will be placed under an unidentified supervisor.

The carrot is that if I survive and meet up to the full expectations of all the tasks required at my present grade level, I *then* can be promoted without competition.

As far as I am concerned, this face-saving management offer is too little, too late. Worse, it fails to address the entire problem of enforcing the law which specified the advancement of handicapped. I do not have to prove my qualifications.

I know I can do the full extent of the next higher grade in my job series or related series and the only reason I have not advanced according to my skills is solely due to management concern over my lack of sight.

Fourteen years is more than enough evidence of that. I totally reject management's argument that others have also gone such long periods without promotion since there are a number of persons, a few of whom I know personally, who do not want advancement and do not actively seek to compete for higher paying jobs of more advanced skill.

If management now wants to test out my capabilities, let them do so at the higher grade I have so long sought. It is only at the higher grade I will willingly undertake the test, for I know I will not fail and both the government and myself become winners. Otherwise, let's take the risk, the long siege of battle in court and prove there is or there is not a provision in law that is meaningful.

I intend to continue the fight until the battle is won no matter how scarred I become for there is no end to manning the barricade on this issue until handicapped persons receive equal treatment in matters involving their qualifications for advancement as do others protected under civil rights laws. Members of the National Federation of the Blind will stand shoulder to shoulder with me, and we will win.

U.S. Department of Labor
Office of the Assistant Secretary
for Administration and Management
Washington, D.C.

September 11, 1980

Certified Letter-Return Receipt Requested

Dear Mr. Saile:

As the Department official designated by the Secretary of Labor to make agency

decisions in cases alleging discrimination under the Equal Employment Opportunity Program, I hereby submit my proposed decision on your complaint.

You allege that because of your handicap (loss of sight) you were not selected for a position of Manpower Analyst, GS-140-13, under announcement ETA 78-244, in the Office of Policy, Evaluation and Research (OPER) and that the underlying reason for your non-selection was because you were given too few, and too insubstantial work assignments since becoming totally blind in 1971.

The evidence gathered during the investigation reveals that the merit staffing of the position in question appears to have been executed properly. However, the events leading up to the actual selection indicate that you may have faced some unnecessary barriers to employment. There is more than a casual connection between your being underutilized, periods of inadequate accommodation, and your non-selection for the position of Manpower Analyst, GS-140-13.

In past years, employment discrimination tended to be viewed as a series of isolated and distinguishable events, for the most part due to ill-will on the part of some identifiable individual or organization. Employment discrimination, as viewed today, is a far more complex phenomenon and is generally described in terms of 'systems' and 'effects'. The investigative file reveals that you were ranked as the second choice for the GS-13 Manpower Analyst position. The question is, with adequate accommodation and proper utilization, would you have been selected for the position?

I have concluded that you are a capable employee, who because of periods of inadequate accommodation and underutilization, could not perform adequately. Therefore, there is reasonable cause to believe

that inadequate accommodation and underutilization were factors in your not being selected for the position in question.

Based on the evidence in the file and my conclusion, I am disposed to find that you should be retroactively promoted to the position of Manpower Analyst, GS-140-13 and awarded back pay to the date you

would have been promoted had you been selected for the position in question.

Sincerely,
Robert L. Davis
Deputy Assistant Secretary for
Administration and Management

ALL THINGS CONSIDERED REPORT FROM CHICAGO

Steve Benson is the President of the NFB of Illinois. He is ever alert to improve the lot of the blind. This means taking action when action is called for—and not just griping and expecting somebody else to do the work.

Recently Steve heard an item about blindness on the program “All Things Considered” on National Public Radio. Here is what he did:

Chicago, Illinois
October 5, 1980

Dear Mr. Jernigan,

Enclosed please find a letter I wrote in response to an item heard on this evening's edition of *All Things Considered* on National Public Radio. The story elicited all sorts of thoughts and emotions, but the most prominent thought was “we've got a lot of work to do.”

Sincerely,
Stephen Benson

Chicago, Illinois
October 5, 1980

Lee Hanson
ALL THINGS CONSIDERED
National Public Radio
Washington, D.C.

Dear Ms. Hanson:

This is in regard to an item on this evening's broadcast of *All Things Considered* concerning a blind woman, Dorothy Edwards.

Sad to say, Mrs. Edwards' portrayal of blindness pretty much typifies the view of blindness held by many people in the United States. It doesn't even approach being accurate.

Blindness is not and need not be a crippling, overwhelming tragedy, unless the blind person allows it to be. Mrs. Edwards bemoaned her loss of ability to work, to watch television, her inability to partake of crafts and to participate fully in her family's activities overall. The reason, she claims, is that she is blind. In fact there are thousands of blind men and women all over the United States who participate fully in the affairs of their families, their churches and their communities.

Mrs. Edwards perceives her life as a blind person as being pretty grim. She apparently believes that blindness, in and of itself, is an insurmountable obstacle. The fact is that blindness is not the most significant problem a blind person must deal with; rather it is the attitudes toward blindness that are the barriers to a full and productive life.

As Mrs. Edwards spoke, I wanted very much to say these things to her; I wanted to tell her of what it is really like being blind; I wanted to tell her of the National Federation of the Blind and the work we do and the why's of that work. Enclosed, please find two brochures entitled *What is the National Federation of the Blind?* One of these, I hope, will find its way to Mrs. Edwards and her family. There is simply no need for that lady to submerge herself in self pity and isolation.

If you or your colleagues have questions about blindness, or about the National Federation of the Blind, contact Kenneth Jernigan, President, 1800 Johnson Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21230; (301) 659-9314.

The National Federation of the Blind has affiliates in every state; the President of our Michigan affiliate is Al Harris, 3761 Roosevelt, Dearborn, Michigan 48124; (313) 274-2283. I hope you would refer Mrs. Edwards to Mr. Harris; I'm sure he could assist her in getting the training one needs to enjoy life as any first-class citizen of these United States should.

If I can be of any assistance to you or your staff, please contact me. Thank you for *All Things Considered*.

Sincerely,
Stephen Benson
President

SUSIE STANZEL HONORED

Susie Stanzel is a chapter president and Federation leader in the Kansas City area. She is also a respected employee of the Department of Agriculture. Recently she received an honor and wrote about it as follows:

Kansas City, Missouri
October 15, 1980

Dear Dr. Jernigan,

I have been working for six and a half years as a computer programmer for the Department of Agriculture. Last May my supervisor called me into his office and asked if I would mind being placed in nomination for the outstanding employee of the year. I said that would be fine with me. He then filled out a long form and pictures were taken and sent to Washington, D.C.

I didn't think much more about it until while I was in the hospital after having Lori my supervisor called me and asked if I could go to Washington. There were six persons invited to Washington. It had been decided to honor all the nominees since everyone was so highly qualified. One of the six persons was sent on to further government wide competition. This man's only handicap was the loss of one arm. Anyway, I received two awards and I am enclosing copies of each. The first one was from the agency which I actually work for, Agriculture Stabilization Conservation Service, signed by the administrator Mr. Ray Fitzgerald, and the second from the department signed by the Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland.

While in Washington, after receiving the awards in the morning, there was a

lunch, and then I had been asked to appear on a panel with the other nominees. Two of them were deaf, one was missing one arm, and the other was paralyzed from a war injury in Vietnam. The sixth person couldn't make it and was not even mentioned during the activities.

Even though I don't consider my blindness any more than an inconvenience, it was nice to be honored since I do feel dur-

ing the past six and a half years that I have tried to go the extra mile. My daughter will find it hard to believe when I tell her what she did when she was just three weeks old. I was glad I went the extra mile this time also since the sixth person wasn't even mentioned.

Your friend,
Susie Stanzel

WASHINGTON STATE COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND APPOINTS NEW DIRECTOR

(Note. The following article, by Hilda Bryant, appeared in the October 16, 1980, *Seattle Post Intelligencer*.)

A Pennsylvania state official was named yesterday to head the Washington State Commission for the Blind, filling the \$35,000-a-year post that has stood vacant since Kenneth Hopkins resigned in a storm of controversy last April.

William James, 49, has been regional director of the nine-county Pittsburgh area Office of Services for the Blind since 1965. James is blind.

The agency's former director, Kenneth Hopkins, resigned on April 21 with a blast at the press for running him out of office. The resignation followed a series of news reports alleging mismanagement of agency funds and equipment, misspent federal funds and misuse of state power for private gain.

Following several state and federal audits and legislative investigations of the agency for the blind, the commissioners asked for Hopkins' resignation. The state sent in a team of management specialists to straighten out the administrative chaos, and several illegal contracts with the agency were canceled.

Two commissioners were replaced by Gov. Dixy Lee Ray, and the commission

began to play a much stronger role in policy-making.

James was selected from among 78 applicants for the job after a nationwide search by the agency's five Washington state commissioners, said Kenneth Elfbrandt, commission chairman.

Elfbrandt said James will arrive next Monday and shortly thereafter will move his wife and two young children to Olympia, where state law requires that state agency heads reside.

Because the state office of the agency is now in Seattle, Elfbrandt said the first task of the new director will be to decide which components of the Seattle center for the blind will have to be moved to Olympia to comply with state law.

Elfbrandt, a blind attorney on the staff of the state Department of Personnel in Olympia, was elected chairman of the commission for the blind and has directed the search for Hopkins' successor.

He said yesterday that James was selected because of his long experience running an agency for the blind. James' Pennsylvania agency serves the same number of blind clients as does the Washington state agency.

THE BOTTOM LINE IS RESPECT FOR PEOPLE

by JOYCE SCANLAN

(Note: The substance of this article appeared in the March-April, 1980, Minnesota Bulletin, which is the bi-monthly publication of the National Federation of the Blind of Minnesota. As Federationists know, Joyce Scanlan is not only the able and energetic President of the NFBM but also a member of the National Board of Directors of the NFB. Her comments and observations place in perspective the problems which we as blind people face and the reason for much of the hostility which we confront in dealing with some of the so-called "professionals" in the field of work with the blind. It cannot be said too often: No group ever goes from second-class citizenship to first-class status in society without passing through a period of hostility.)

I have been involved in the organized blind movement now for almost ten years. My early interest in the Federation came out of the frustration I felt while attempting to reassemble the pieces of my life when the point was reached where I could no longer deny my blindness. I had struggled to gain some sense of identity and self-worth by using the "services" of the state agency for the blind and the Minneapolis Society for the Blind. Realizing the futility of this effort, I closed my case with state services early in 1971.

What I have come to understand during the 1970's could never be fully covered in a book—or, for that matter, several books. No "professionals" in the field of work with the blind ever could or would have ever taught me what I now know about such things as the importance of competency in the alternative techniques of blindness, dealing with anger, freeing myself from the victimization trap, taking charge of my own life, and assuming full responsibility for decision-making, presenting a positive image to the public, and treating everyone with love, respect, and dignity.

Yes, I know and understand more than I did a decade ago, but I am still often puzzled and even angered by many situations

which occur and by many statements which are made. Here are a few examples: The state agency for the blind loudly proclaims its belief in and practice of confidentiality with respect to blind clients, while counselors are, at the same time, traveling throughout the state talking freely about specific cases and the private lives of the blind persons they are supposedly employed to "serve." Minneapolis Society for the Blind, NAC (National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped), and American Foundation for the Blind get away with circulating bold-faced lies in newspapers, seemingly without any penalties or consequences. The state agency uses the Social Security program as a punitive weapon against blind persons who wish to pursue a vocational plan which may be different from what the agency believes blind people should be doing. Minneapolis Society officials and staff continue to make public statements concerning the Federation which absolutely cannot be substantiated. The Minneapolis Society officers and staff behave so boorishly that one wonders whether they would best be served in the Department of Corrections or the Department of Mental Health. Minneapolis So-

ciety supporters, including blind people, appear before legislative committees and make negative and nonsensical statements. Children in kindergarten have more sense of decorum than these so-called "adults," who shout out ridiculous attacks in a public hearing.

I believe very strongly that the irrational, boorish, and unscrupulous behavior which I have mentioned are the result of the fact that "professionals" (and, ultimately, blind people themselves) do not regard those who are blind as people. Would the state agency talk of confidentiality in one breath and act absolutely to violate confidentiality in the next breath if it were dealing with school administrators or people in the medical field? Of course not. It would not dare. Would Ray Kempf (a blind board member of the Minneapolis Society for the Blind and a card-carrying member of the American Council of the Blind) make public statements about the boats he sells when it could be easily and directly proved that the statements were false? Of course not. He would not, because (if he had to be judged by the standards of *people*, sighted people) he would have to be concerned about his credibility in the community, his ability to make a living. Would Richard Johnstone (the businessman who allegedly works for no compensation as the "volunteer" President of the board of the Minneapolis Society for the Blind and who gets away with getting contracts to do remodeling at the Society's building) behave boorishly and abusively at Society board meetings if those in the room were not blind people but legislators, businessmen and women, or just ordinary citizens in the community? Of course not. He would not dare, because he would be concerned about losing the respect of those present, and about the consequences of his behavior. Johnstone, other Minneapolis Society offi-

cials, and some of the personnel of the state agency for the blind hold themselves to one set of standards of behavior and morals when dealing with blind persons and an entirely different set of standards of behavior and morals when dealing with sighted people.

So is it any wonder, then, (regrettable and pathetic though it may be) that those of us who are blind too often set very low expectations for ourselves, give ourselves little credit for anything, and treat our fellow blind exactly as we have been treated by the professionals?

The professionals will not (even if they wanted to, they could not) suddenly change their long-standing conduct toward blind people—their treatment of us as inferior and non-persons. Habits which are firmly set cannot be quickly altered. We as blind people will have to take the lead in initiating the process and making the change. We must recognize the situation we are in and set about making the necessary alterations in public attitudes and in our own thinking. We must begin with the constant reminder to ourselves that (regardless of how often others may speak to the contrary) we are *people*—with the same strengths and weaknesses possessed by those who happen to be sighted. We must make a conscious and continuing effort to show love and respect for other blind people, understanding where all of us have come from, and we must also have love and understanding for the sighted—not blaming them for their prejudice and misconceptions but recognizing the source of the problem and that it diminishes them as well as us. It lessens the humanity of all of us.

These changes may be almost as hard for many of us as for the professionals. After all—we, too, are part of the public-at-large—of society, which molds our thought and shapes our view. However, we presumably

have a higher motivation to bring about change than do the professionals, because our lives and our futures are at stake. We must constantly keep our essential humanity and normality before us as a reminder

and a stimulus. We only want to be treated like exactly what we are (no more, no less)—ordinary human beings—*persons*, with all of the dignity and responsibility which the terms imply.

FACTS ABOUT MINIMUM WAGES FOR THE BLIND A REPORT FROM BLIND INDUSTRIES AND SERVICES OF MARYLAND

Repeatedly the sheltered workshop managers throughout the country have said that if they pay blind persons a decent wage, terrible things will happen: The shops will go broke; contracts will dry up and no longer be available; and blind persons will be out of work. When the Subcommittee on Labor Standards of the United States House of Representatives recently asked Ralph Sanders, the capable and energetic head of Blind Industries and Services of Maryland, for information and comment, the response came back in clear and convincing detail.

It is not bad business to pay the blind a decent wage. It does not drive away contracts or ruin the shops or take away jobs from the workers. In fact, it does the exact opposite. It gives the blind production worker a stake in the business, a reason to work and a motive to produce.

Ralph Sanders' comments and statistics make sense. They tell it like it is. They give still another answer to the question, "Why the National Federation of the Blind?":

Blind Industries and Services
of Maryland
Ralph W. Sanders, President
Baltimore, Maryland
September 18, 1980

Mr. Earl F. Pasbach, Esq.
Staff-Director-Counsel
Subcommittee on Labor Standards
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Pasbach:

We are very pleased to respond to the fourteen (14) questions you posed to us on the issues relevant to the hearings on Section 14-C under the Fair Labor Standards Act. My answers are enclosed.

As additional information to our response to Question #7, I am enclosing a computer print-out of the wages paid to all production employees.

In addition, you have asked me what the average hourly rate is for blind, direct labor employees in our Industries Division in comparison with the average hourly wage paid to severely, multiply handicapped persons. The average hourly rate paid to blind production employees is \$3.33. The average hourly rate paid to severely, multiply handicapped blind employees is \$3.23. The lowest wage paid in either category is \$3.10 per hour. The highest wage rate paid to a blind, non-multiply handicapped employee is \$4.35 per hour. This compares with the highest hourly rate paid to a se-

verely, multiply handicapped employee of \$4.35.

If you have any additional questions, or need clarification on any of the material submitted to you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
Ralph W. Sanders

Questions and Responses

Question 1:

It has been stated that if we require the workshops to pay all blind workers the minimum wage, such increase in cost for workshop activity will lessen the number of blind and other handicapped workers who would be able to obtain jobs in the workshop programs. What is your answer to this statement?

Response:

The statement presented in Question one contains several false premises as well as misleading conclusions. It also presents the worst possible management approach to the operation of a Sheltered Workshop Program for the Blind.

A number of Directors of Sheltered Workshop Programs for the Blind have publicly said that if they were required to pay the minimum wage it would mean a reduction in the number of severely, multiply handicapped blind persons who would be employed. This is a most unfortunate view of the role of management. The mandate for the Sheltered Workshop Program for the Blind is to provide training, and employment services to blind and severely, multiply handicapped blind persons. If cost of manufacturing increases in any sector, be it in the cost of raw materials, the cost of energy, the cost of financing or the cost of labor, it is management's responsibility to find methods of absorbing the cost either through increased pricing or through im-

proved efficiency or both. During the past couple of years, all of us who operate Sheltered Workshop Programs for the Blind have had to absorb substantial increases in cost of raw materials, utilities, and financing. I have not observed any significant diminution in the number of blind and severely, multiply handicapped blind persons served in the sheltered workshop system. A good management team will respond to such increases through increased pricing, where possible, and through improved efficiency. It seems to me that the proper approach for management to take is to first look at reduction in management and support costs before looking to reduce cost in the training and employment of blind and severely, multiply handicapped blind persons. Unfortunately, this approach is not reflected in the statement contained in Question one. Of course, management should always be vigilant to keep cost at a minimum. It is seemingly axiomatic, however, that where increasing costs do not require it, management will tend to increase the cost of management. This is not a phenomenon restricted to Sheltered Workshops for the Blind, but is generally characteristic of business. The current rule under 14C which provides for subminimum wage payments to blind and severely, multiply handicapped blind persons gives management an automatic safeguard from maintaining tight cost control on management services, support services and other overhead factors.

The statement also falsely assumes that there is no correlation between wage rate and productivity. In fact, the underlying assumption behind the statement is that productivity is the principal guiding mechanism for income. Certainly both factors are interrelated. It takes improved productivity to warrant high wages, in most employment situations, but it also takes

improved wages to ensure future increases in productivity. Based on the experiences of Blind Industries and Services of Maryland, we believe that minimum wage payments do have a direct connection with productivity levels. This may be truer in the Sheltered Workshop for the Blind environment than regular industry since you are dealing with a universe of employees who have been severely, economically suppressed throughout their employment history as blind and severely, multiply handicapped blind persons. Since BISM went to a guaranteed minimum wage policy on July 1, 1977 we have experienced a rate of per person productivity increase that is substantially ahead of that for American industry. A portion of this increase in productivity must be attributed to improved training programs. No doubt, a portion of it is the result of improved supervision and management approaches to the manufacturing process. But, based on our experience, we believe that a significant, contributing factor is the minimum wage policy. For example, during fiscal years 1979 and 1980, the per person productivity increase per year was in excess of 20%.

The statement also falsely assumes that Sheltered Workshops for the Blind have available very little relief in the pricing mechanism, particularly for labor cost increases. This is simply not the case. A major source of sales for products and services of Sheltered Workshops for the Blind is to federal agencies under the Javits, Wagner O'Day Act. The government sales program does provide a vehicle, sluggish as it may be, for obtaining price relief when legitimate cost increases can be demonstrated. A requirement that sheltered workshops for the blind pay minimum wage would be reflected in the cost of merchandise sold through federal agencies, and would result in higher incomes to Sheltered

Workshops for the Blind enabling them to meet the increased labor cost. Granted, not all sales are in this area, but an aggressive management team can develop pricing mechanisms to provide adequate relief in other areas.

Finally, it should be kept in mind, that American industry has used a similar argument in opposing minimum wage increases throughout the history of the Fair Labor Standards Act. It has been claimed that substantial sectors of the unskilled labor market would be unemployed if minimum wages were increased. A look back at the employment history of the past several decades reflects that this argument is simply not correct.

Question 2:

Please state the number of blind individuals employed by your workshop during the years of 1976 to 1979.

Response:

| FISCAL YEAR | NUMBER |
|-------------|--------|
| 1976 | 120 |
| 1977 | 155 |
| 1978 | 130 |
| 1979 | 111 |

Question 3:

What percentage of these individuals are involved in work as production employees and how many are trained in independent living?

Response:

| FISCAL YEAR | % PRODUCTION EMPLOYEES |
|-------------|------------------------|
| 1976 | 85 |
| 1977 | 85 |
| 1978 | 87 |
| 1979 | 92 |

Since 1977, BISM has operated a program for training for production employees not only in areas related to independent living, but in all areas where the employee

can benefit from developing the alternative techniques needed by the blind to succeed in all aspects of community life. In addition, a blind person entering the Industries Division today would, if needed, be provided a basic training program designed to assist the individual in functioning independently in the community.

Question 4:

To your knowledge, how many blind people reside in the Baltimore area?

Response:

The best estimates are those calculated on the standard HEW formula of two blind persons out of every 1,000 persons in the population. Using this formula, the blind population of Baltimore City is estimated to be 1,580.

Question 5:

How many blind people that are now employed have other handicaps? Please state what those handicaps are.

Response:

- a. Forty or forty-one percent of the blind production employees.
- b. Handicaps:
 1. Cerebro-Vascular Accident
 2. Mental or Emotional Illness
 3. Socially or Culturally Deprived (foreign speaking—ex-convict, etc.)
 4. Cardiovascular
 5. Other Neurological
 6. Deaf
 7. Mental Retardation
 8. Alcoholism
 9. Drug Addiction
 10. Epilepsy
 11. Diabetes
 12. Over 55
 13. Paralysis
 14. Amputee
 15. Orthopedic
 16. Deaf/Blind

Question 6:

Do you feel that a blind individual should be paid minimum wage regardless of his productivity?

Response:

The general policy of required minimum wage payments does not provide a vehicle for paying individuals less than \$3.10 per hour if an individual has low productivity levels. We believe that blind and severely, multiply handicapped blind individuals are entitled to the same treatment. As has been noted in testimony before the Subcommittee on Labor Standards, it is not at all uncommon for Sheltered Workshops for the Blind to pay sighted production employees the minimum wage or more even when their productivity is less than that of blind individuals who are being paid below the minimum wage level. The reason for the minimum wage payments to the sighted individual is clear. The law requires that the payments be made. Yet, the sheltered workshop management which claims that minimum wage payments for their blind workers would cause them to substantially reduce the blind and severely, multiply handicapped blind labor force has not seen fit, for whatever reason, to lay off sighted employees who are low in productivity rating. It should also be kept in mind that a person's productivity level is as much dependent on the equipment, production line design, and support services as it is on the individual's ability. Many of the blind and severely, multiply handicapped blind individuals in Sheltered Workshops for the Blind have low productivity ratings which result not from the inability of the blind individual, but of obsolete equipment, poor design of production lines, or inadequate support services. As long as the federal law permits subminimum wage payments, there is little pressure on the management of Sheltered Workshops for the Blind to

make improvements in operation which will result in higher levels of productivity since the difference can be made up through reduced payments to blind and severely, multiply handicapped blind workers.

Question 7:

Please state the amount of wages being paid to your employees at the workshop? Please break that down on an individual basis?

Response:

Total wages paid to production employees in the Industries Division during fiscal year 1980 amounted to \$1,148,298.

Question 8:

Please state the amount of subsidies which your workshop received from State, Federal and local agencies for the years 1976 to 1979, inclusive. Please give a breakdown for each year.

Response:

BISM annually received a State Appropriation which has been utilized to support the Vending Facilities Program for the Blind, a Rehabilitation Training Program, administration of the agency and the Industries Division—what would traditionally be called the Workshop Program. Listed below are the figures for the appropriate period with the Industries Division broken out as a special category so that you may have data which you can compare with other Workshop Programs.

STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDS TO BISM

| | STATE | FEDERAL |
|------|-----------|---------|
| 1976 | 1,014,271 | 22,116 |
| 1977 | 1,014,271 | 31,200 |
| 1978 | 1,014,271 | 31,200 |
| 1979 | 1,087,834 | 29,025 |

INCOME TO INDUSTRIES DIVISION

| | STATE | FEDERAL | SALES | % SALES TO APPROPRIATION |
|------|---------|---------|-----------|--------------------------|
| 1976 | 545,555 | 0 | 1,794,937 | 30.3 |
| 1977 | 509,660 | 0 | 2,559,591 | 19.91 |
| 1978 | 356,641 | 0 | 3,289,800 | 10.84 |
| 1979 | 310,184 | 0 | 3,792,274 | 8.17 |

Question 9:

Please state the amount of income that you received from your work operations during these same periods? Please give a breakdown for each year.

Response:

TOTAL INCOME FROM OPERATION

| | SALES | APPROPRIATION | (STATE APPROP. TO IND. AS % OF SALES) |
|------|-----------|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1976 | 1,794,937 | 545,555 | 30.39 |
| 1977 | 2,559,591 | 509,660 | 19.91 |
| 1978 | 3,289,800 | 356,641 | 10.84 |
| 1979 | 3,792,274 | 310,184 | 8.17 |

Question 10:

It has been argued that if the workshops were required to give the blind workers minimum wage that the workshops would "cream" and serve only the less severely handicapped persons contrary to the intent of the Rehabilitation Act. What is your answer to this statement?

Response:

It is essential that the issues involved be kept separate. Whether Sheltered Workshops for the Blind are required to pay minimum wages to blind and severely, multiply handicapped blind employees, or, whether they are not so required, does not mean that they will not cream in the sense it is used in this question. If the management of a given Sheltered Workshop for the Blind Program is not dedicated to carrying out the mandate of the facility, it is likely that that management will cream under the current circumstances. In fact, under the current situation, the shel-

tered workshop management which would be willing to take only the most productive blind employees could still do so, and yet arrange piece-rate studies so that they were able to pay these top producers less than the federally guaranteed minimum wage. The requirement for minimum wage payments to blind and severely, multiply handicapped blind persons would simply protect those persons who are currently being taken advantage of, if any current management is oriented toward "cream-ing".

The Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 mandated that the Rehabilitation process serve the severely, multiply handicapped. Those Sheltered Workshop for the Blind Programs which receive federal rehabilitation money are under an accountability responsibility to the funding source to provide services to the most severely handicapped individuals. If a Sheltered Workshop for the Blind fails to live up to this mandate, in the context of the rehabilitation process, it is the responsibility of the Rehabilitation Services Administration and the State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, not the United States Department of Labor, to intervene and take corrective action.

As I said above, I believe that the requirement to pay minimum wage has really no effect on "cream-ing". Beyond that, as I noted in my response to Question one, there is no reason why selecting only the top, blind production employees would be necessary. Every manufacturing environment involves a variety of skill levels to complete a production process. The most effective manufacturing system will result from putting the individuals with the right type of skill into the right type of position. The severely, multiply handicapped blind person, may well be ideally suited, given

his or her other abilities, to carry out a specific job assignment.

Question 11:

Please state the evidence that you have that the workshops in general have not properly and adequately mainstreamed blind and other handicapped workers into private industry.

Response:

Two major factors enter into the ability of a Sheltered Workshop for the Blind Program to be a positive factor in the movement of blind individuals into mainstream employment. The first is a question of adequate training for the blind individual in the alternative techniques which the blind individual needs to function independently in a sighted environment, such as travel and Braille. At Blind Industries and Services of Maryland, prior to the establishment of an aggressive Rehabilitation Training Program in 1976, the production employee received little or no training in such vital areas. It follows, therefore, that any efforts at vocational training had a limited chance of success. Since our training programs have had several years to improve and to develop new approaches, our job placement rate has also greatly improved because the blind production employees have begun to seek opportunities in the employment mainstream with adequate skills to be successful in that environment.

The second major factor lacking in a Sheltered Workshop environment is an adequate program to instill self-confidence on the part of the blind and severely, multiply handicapped blind individual. Sheltered Workshops for the Blind are regarded by the blind, as by the public, as being facilities that provide sheltered employment for individuals who are not independent. Therefore, when the Rehabilitation Agency sends a blind individual to the sheltered

workshop, it says to the blind individual that he or she has real problems and the individual tends to stop fighting the system after a prolonged period of time. If no program is available to help build self-confidence and stimulate the individual, the end result is going to be a continued deterioration in attitude on the part of the blind production employee, making competitive placement a difficult possibility.

Beyond these two major factors, there is a general failure within the rehabilitation system in this country to provide adequate training and employment opportunities for the blind individuals in the mainstream of our economy. The best evidence to confirm this statement is found in figures from the Federal Department of Health, Education and Welfare which indicated that unemployment and underemployment among the blind of employable age exceeded 70%. This figure is astonishing.

I believe that all three factors listed above relate to a problem of the professionals in the field of work with and for the blind which arises from lack of belief in the ability of blind and severely, multiply handicapped blind persons. The assumption, far too often, is that the blind person is not capable of competitive productivity, and therefore no major effort will be made until the blind person demonstrates so much ability that activity becomes necessary. In far too many cases, aggressive placement activity is not undertaken because it is assumed that the blind person is not capable of competing in the job market. Change the assumption to a positive one and you will change the nature, scope, and type of competitive placement program which the facility will undertake.

With regard to your question, the Greenly Study is the most authoritative source reflecting the lack of competitive placements developing out of the Shel-

tered Workshop for the Blind environment.

Question 12:

Do you believe the Advisory Committee should be reinstated? Please give reasons.

Response:

Based on our experience, the Advisory Committee did little to contribute to the type of changes in the Sheltered Workshop Programs for the Blind which are most needed to bring the programs up to the standards of 1980. I can find no demonstrable way in which our program has been adversely affected because the Advisory Committee has not been in existence for the past several years.

Additionally, I believe there were some significant problems in the way in which the Advisory Committee was constituted. Its primary constituency was the management of the Sheltered Workshop for the Blind Programs, and therefore, its primary concern was always to deal with the management problems of the Sheltered Workshop Programs for the Blind. If the committee is reinstated, I believe its focus should be altered and that its primary membership should be made up of advocacy representatives on behalf of blind persons served by Sheltered Workshop Programs.

Question 13:

Do you believe Work-Activity Centers should be merged with workshops, whenever possible? Please give reasons.

Response:

I believe that there are dangerous consequences which can result from involving a Work Activity Center in a Sheltered Workshop environment. I believe that such dangers would be magnified if the Sheltered Workshop was required to pay the federally constituted minimum wage. Al-

ready, based on my experience, Work Activity Centers often become involved in work on a regular production project which should be carried out in the production unit of the Sheltered Workshop Program. The temptation is extremely great to misuse the Work Activity Center against its intended purpose.

I generally believe that the Work Activity Center needs to be given considerable attention by the handicapped persons served in those centers to determine if new directions for Work Activity Centers are not needed. There are two conflicting claims made about Work Activity Centers. One claim holds that the Work Activity Center provides an environment in which an individual with very low work skills can gain experience and, hopefully after a period of time, upgrade those skills so that he or she can enter the workshop environment. The second claim holds that the Work Activity Center provides an opportunity for an individual who is not sufficiently productive to be in a Sheltered Workshop environment to have meaningful activity. I believe that the objectives of the first claim can be met with Vocational Training Programs and with on-the-job training programs in the Sheltered Workshop environment without requiring the use of a Work Activity Center. I believe that the objective of the second claim can be better achieved through the development of meaningful recreational and continuing educational programs for individuals who, because of severe limitations, simply cannot be productive. In short, I believe that the Work Activity Center may have outlived its usefulness in the context of the needs of the handicapped in this country in the 1980's. I believe this is especially true among the blind.

The one remaining reservation which I have about Work Activity Centers is the

requirement that someone made a determination that an individual is not productive, and will have extreme problems in becoming productive. It is far too easy to underestimate the potential of an individual to respond to training in a real work environment, and the damage which results from an incorrect evaluation is virtually irreversible.

Question 14:

Could you please explain what the nature and quantity of the unmet needs of the blind in the Baltimore area are?

Response:

There is a serious need for a larger library program for the blind in the Baltimore area. Access to informational and educational sources is essential if a group of individuals are going to achieve mainstream participation in economic, social or community life.

There is a serious need for improved programs for placement of blind individuals in competitive employment. BISM has greatly increased its goals and objectives in the job placement area, but it is only one agency providing services to the adult blind in the area, and has not yet been able to receive adequate funding to develop a sufficient job placement staff. Additionally, job placement in Maryland is not regarded as a primary mandate of the organization. This unmet need goes hand in hand with the need for better community educational programs, to acquaint the public about the blind. It also goes hand in hand with the need for expanded rehabilitation training facilities in the Baltimore area to serve a larger number of blind persons.

Blind individuals who have severe additional handicaps which make it difficult to live in the community independently, receive very little attention in the current mix

of programs for the blind in Maryland. There is currently no agency for the blind which is mandated to or funded for providing support services to assist these individuals in living in the community. We are currently involved in an overall study of ways to improve service to the blind in the state of Maryland, and in particular, we are working closely with several other private agencies in the Baltimore area to develop a plan to provide the needed services to enable severely, multiply handicapped blind individuals to function independently

within the community and get adequate support.

Blind Industries and Services of Maryland has worked with consumer organizations within the state in making proposals to the Maryland General Assembly to reorganize services to the blind within the State to achieve solutions to these unmet needs. As yet, the question of solutions to the problems continues to be studied by the Maryland General Assembly, the Governor's Office and other involved agency officials.

BLIND MAKE AGENCY BACK DOWN ON CUTTING WAGES REPORT FROM NEW JERSEY

For quite some time the New Jersey Commission for the Blind has been saying that it intends to abandon its policy of paying blind shopworkers the minimum wage. Of course, the Commission doesn't put it quite that way. It talks of "establishing piece-work rates," economic hardships, new incentives and new strategies, and all of the rest of the usual jargon. But the bottom line is the same old story: Cut the pay, and give the workers less than the minimum wage. As might be expected, the National Federation of the Blind has taken the lead in fighting the battle for the rights of the workers. Where are the ACB, NAC, and the American Foundation for the Blind,

and all of those others who believe in "standards" and "quality services?" Apparently the "quality services" extend to the management but not to the blind employees, the people for whom the agency was established in the first place.

October 31, 1980, was the day of confrontation. Led by the Federation, the blind picketed. The director of the agency was not available for comment, but a subordinate read a statement in her behalf. The wage cuts would be postponed. A "study" would be made. Chalk up another victory for organized effort and concerted action.

Here is how the *Newark Star Ledger*, the state's largest newspaper, reported it:

BLIND WORKERS RALLY AT STATE AGENCY ON PLAN TO REVISE PAYMENT METHOD

by GUY STERLING

(From *The Star-Ledger*, October 31, 1980)

A small but vocal group of blind, and some sighted persons, demonstrated in downtown Newark yesterday against a plan by the State Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired to abandon paying sight-

less workers the minimum wage at its contract workshops.

Chanting "We speak for ourselves" and "A full day's pay for a full day's work," the group of 30 picketed in front of the

commission's offices on Raymond Boulevard during the afternoon rush hour.

Many were employees of the commission's workshops where blind persons were employed in manual skills positions and guaranteed the minimum wage of \$3.10 an hour after the state entered into business transactions with private industry.

As many as 300 persons at workshops in Newark, Somerset and Westmont could be affected by a commission decision to pay workers on a piece-rate basis. The decision, an agency spokesman revealed yesterday, had been put off but not dismissed.

"It looks as if this is the direction we may need to go to make the shops self-sustaining," conceded Richard F. Friend, assistant chief of vocational rehabilitation services in the commission.

"If it's set up properly, piece work is a way for people to make more money than they're now earning."

Friend, who is blind, admitted that the change in the commission's wage policy could also end up cutting the take-home pay of the blind workers.

"It would be better than the shops folding up and leaving no jobs for anyone," he maintained.

Friend read a statement issued by Norma J. Krajczar, commission director, that declared implementation of piece work at the workshops will be "deferred pending further investigation and development of equitable procedures."

"No new system will be instituted until a manual of operation is written and avail-

able to the labor force and management," Mrs. Krajczar, who also is blind, contended in her text.

She continued that the contract shops are "encountering financial difficulties and an in-depth study is now being conducted to determine what steps must be taken to insure their continuance."

The organizer of the protest, Jim Sofka, of Irvington, a blind person and president of the National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey, insisted that employment at the workshops amounted to "exploitation."

"It's bad enough that all the blind worker earns is the minimum wage, especially when you consider that the companies selling their products do so at a nice profit," he said.

"Many of the blind employees at the workshops are living in tough conditions. They'd prefer to stay off Social Security, to be productive, contributing members of society, rather than living off society. This decision will make it difficult for them to do."

Sofka said the workers wanted to demonstrate before a ruling is put into effect because "it'll be hard to stop once it's started."

He maintained that the commission has a study, prepared by consultants outside the state government, on the conversion to piece rates, but has refused to release it to the blind workers.

"In essence, it comes down to what the commission is trying to hide and if it is really looking out for the blind," he alleged.

MORE ABOUT THE "RESIGNATION" OF JESSE ROSTEN

The Minneapolis Society for the Blind has apparently fallen upon evil times. Only a year ago Richard Johnstone, the "volun-

teer" President of that august body, was singing the praises of Jesse Rosten and talking of the joys of victory and the certainty

of peace and prosperity ahead. Only a year later all turned to dust and ashes.

The much praised Mr. Rosten has been allowed to "resign." Under date of September 19, 1980, Mr. Johnstone sent a letter to the staff and board members of the Minneapolis Society. To say the least, it was unceremonious. One could say that it was brief and to the point. In fact, it might almost be called curt. Here is the letter in its entirety:

September 19, 1980

Attention: Board Members and
Employees of MSB

Jesse H. Rosten has submitted to me his resignation as Executive Director of the Industrial Division and External Affairs, to be effective immediately. I have accepted this resignation and wish him well in the future.

Melvin E. Saterbak has been appointed to the position of Acting Executive Director, assuming the responsibility for the supervision and guidance of all agency functions.

Sincerely,
Richard R. Johnstone

Certainly Mr. Johnstone minces no words, and it is not hard to read between the lines. In a letter dated September 29, 1980, Joyce Scanlan (who, as President of the NFB of Minnesota, has led the fight in trying to reform the Minneapolis Society and make it give quality services) wrote:

As you already know, Jesse Rosten of the Minneapolis Society "resigned" from his job as executive director on September 19. It was all very sudden. The Board was informed by letter from Johnstone the following week.

Since September 19 we have learned

more of what really happened. Several of our representatives on the MSB Board have called Mel Saterbak, Acting Director, and other MSB officials. Nadine Jacobson and Curtis Chong attempted to sit in on a Society executive committee meeting last Thursday and were thrown out. Ray Kempf came over to our office yesterday to discuss some common "concerns."

It is absolutely certain that Jesse's resignation was asked for, and all is not well at MSB. At the present time the agency is \$225,000 in the red. Last spring when Jesse took his leave of absence, it was the first step in firing him. At that time MSB was more than one hundred thousand dollars in the red. Jesse asked for the leave so he could "get himself straightened out." He alleged that he would be able to raise the funds to make up the deficit. At the end of one month, Jesse claimed he was "straightened out" and ready to return. Then the dual directors position was set up to assist Jesse in carrying out his plan. Mel would continue with the regular job of running the agency, and Jesse would be out raising money. The action was taken because the executive committee was divided concerning Jesse. The personnel committee had recommended unanimously that Jesse be fired, but there were those on the executive committee who believed that the Society owed Jesse something.

Well, less than six months later the agency is deeper in debt, and Jesse was asked to leave. Kempf claims that he took Jesse aside and suggested to him that he not look for a job in work with the blind. Jesse is too "controversial." Saterbak and others say they would not be surprised if Jesse turns up as an employee of the American Foundation. We do know that Jesse is looking for a job

around here and throughout the country in agencies dealing with all disabilities, not just blind. All MSB people seem to agree that he will not have an easy time finding a job.

Since Saterbak left his rehab position last spring to be a co-director, the rehab program at MSB has been without leadership. Our representatives on the Board have raised questions about the priorities given to rehab and the sheltered workshop. We believe that the blind workers in the shop, many of whom are paid less than the minimum wage, are providing the profits to support the deficit in the rehab program. Of course, MSB officials and staff deny that the workers are subsidizing rehab. We all feel that the rehab program always plays second fiddle to the workshop, and it is really just window-dressing to make the Society appear to be training blind persons. It is really used as a source of recruits for the workshop assembly lines.

Perhaps some of our complaining is finally paying off a little. MSB is going to search for a "qualified" person to head the rehab department. The personnel committee will screen candidates down to three people. These names will be submitted to Stanley Potter (the Director of the state agency) for his consideration. Then the MSB executive committee will make the final decision. We have now been informed, after all of our persuading and suggesting, that we can name one of our representatives to serve on the personnel committee.

When the rehab director has been chosen, probably by January, the personnel committee will search for an executive director. Saterbak will apply. He will be in a rough spot if he doesn't work out as acting director, because by that time, if he has failed, he

won't be able to return to his former rehab position.

Over the long haul, Saterbak is not a satisfactory director for MSB; but for the time being, he is far superior to Jesse. He, Saterbak, probably won't work out. He has a very smooth manner on the outside, but that's only a shell which cracks very easily and quickly when hit. However, I believe that he prefers peace and will try to get along with the blind community. His problem will likely be with Johnstone.

In our conversation with Kempf yesterday it seemed that he wanted to find a way to settle our differences. He admits that he is close to NAC and the Foundation. He simply can't comprehend that the basic problem with the Society is how blind people are treated there. Kempf feels so removed from the general population of blind persons that he will probably never accept the fact that most blind people are poorly served by the Society.

The Ray Kempf to whom Joyce refers is a blind man living in Minnesota. Otherwise undistinguished, he is what one might call a sort of Universal Vice President—that is, a Vice President of the Minneapolis Society for the Blind, of NAC, and perhaps of other things. It goes without saying that he is a member of the American Council of the Blind.

To complete this report, we have still later news about the job hunting of Mr. Rosten. We understand that he has been hired as Administrator of Mount Zion Temple in St. Paul, Minnesota. In other words, he is completely out of work with the blind. It is not likely that he will be greatly missed, and perhaps the atmosphere of the Temple will be conducive to meditation concerning justice, retribution, truth,

repentance, and similar lofty topics. One calls to mind the language of the first Psalm: "Blessed is the man that walketh

not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

A VISIT WITH OUR PRESIDENT

by PATRICIA MUNSON

(Note: Patricia Munson is the able and energetic editor of the Spokesman, which is the newsletter of our California affiliate. Recently she wrote an article about our California President, Sharon Gold, who has done a tremendously effective job in reorganizing and building the affiliate. The article appeared in the September/October issue of the Spokesman and we think it should be shared with Federationists throughout the country. It reads as follows:)

As Federationists recall, two years ago the National Federation of the Blind, Western Division, did not yet exist. It was in November of 1978, that the new affiliate in California was created. At that time, Sharon Gold was elected President and the members gave her the most difficult task of providing the strong leadership necessary to build a meaningful, productive unit of the NFB.

With the help of all of us, Sharon immediately set to work to begin the rebuilding of the California affiliate of the National Federation of the Blind. Today, we know the degree of our success. The affiliate started with nothing (no money, no office, no supplies). But, we had elected a President with great imagination and foresight; two years later, all has changed.

No organization can be a success if it does not have dedicated members. In California, we have many, many hard working, loyal members. So, with the combination of excellent leadership and fine members how could we fail!

Approximately one year ago, I wrote in the *Spokesman* of my visit to President Gold's home. I told you of how the NFB had invaded not only her life, but also her residence. NFB canes greeted me as I en-

tered the front door; NFB material almost squeezed me off every chair in which I tried to sit; and NFB material met me as I tried to hang up my sweater in the closet. Don't get me wrong, President Gold is a most tidy housekeeper, but what was she to do? As I said, the NFB had moved in. The telephone rang incessantly, for members and non-members always know where to call when assistance is wanted. Her secretary came and went taking endless dictation. Always, President Gold kept asking me for suggestions as to how we could improve the affiliate and how we might progress. I told her that it appeared to me that she was doing exceedingly well on her own.

Some improvements for the affiliate were obvious; the NFB Western Division needed money, for with money comes many luxuries such as an office, equipment, and more secretarial help.

Well, the rest is history; Federationists know of the many fundraising projects that have been so successful. Who among us has not sold peanuts, candy, Knott's Berry Farm products, and taken donations for drawing tickets?

Now let me report to you what I saw during my most recent visit two months ago with our President. Some of those canes

still greeted me at her front door; that material still fought me for a free chair; and that closet still looks like a small warehouse for NFB literature, but the members of the NFB Western Division now possess a very fine office.

Our new office houses some fine equipment, but now this equipment, too, must also compete with some of those NFB canes and mounds of NFB material. What I am trying to tell you is that our affiliate is growing faster than the speed of light. We have been so successful we cannot keep up with our own progress. Even when I was there to help, there was never enough time to file and sort all the material that comes in to the affiliate. This is a wonderful predicament, but I jokingly told our President how I pity her. She so generously gives of her time and genius that she has created such an NFB mountain on her shoulders that she will never be able to shake herself free.

At the height of the Roman Empire, it was said that all roads led to Rome. In California, the progressive blind of this state know that all roads lead to the National

Federation of the Blind, Western Division office. Our President is the undisputed leader of this fine affiliate. Without her endless hard work, we would not possess what we have today. She provides the same fine quality leadership for this affiliate that Dr. Jernigan provides as President of the NFB. Integrity and tenacity are just two of the qualities she possesses. In one month alone, President Gold wrote more than two hundred letters on our behalf creating a file for the month more than an inch and one-half thick. Never complaining, she quietly goes about her work spending more than an average of eight hours per day working on our behalf while holding down a full-time job as a public school teacher. If you doubt my word, ask anyone who has visited our state office or talked to President Gold at midnight by telephone while she is still stuffing envelopes with letters written to us or letters written on our behalf.

California, indeed, has a very fine affiliate of which we can all be proud. We certainly have President Gold's leadership abilities to thank for our growth, development, and success.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE BLIND IN BROADCASTING REPORT FROM NEW YORK

Pamela Dillon is a blind person. Recently she tried to enroll in a school which trains radio announcers. She was rejected—not because she failed to meet entrance requirements, not because she has a bad voice, not because of laziness or apathy: but because she is blind. She has filed a complaint with the New York Human Rights Commission, and the Federation is doing what it can to assist her. The following letter tells the story:

November 15, 1980
To Loraine Stayer

Dear Laurie:

Here is an account of Pam's attempt to enroll in Announcer Training Studios so far. She knew of this school because so many of her brother's friends and associates in radio went there.

Early in February, 1980 I called Announcer Training Studios and said my

daughter was interested in becoming an announcer and would like to visit the school. The Registrar came on the phone and said there was a seminar on Saturday the 16th of February. Pam and I were invited and in the meantime he would forward an application and literature.

We arrived on time and were shown into the room with about 30 other prospective students. Mr. Morris Brownstein greeted us all and we were then taken on a tour of a "studio", where we were shown turntable, mike and console or board. The DJ played a cartridge station jingle, cued up a record, and let the record play when the jingle ended.

We then went back to the room and Mr. Brownstein discussed the curriculum and the licenses you would be qualified to take the examinations for at the end of the course. He then discussed the cost of the course and financing of same. Graduates then told of their successful employment following completion of the course.

Mr. Brownstein said auditions would be held the following Thursday at 2:30 p.m. and at 6:30 p.m. They are given to check voice, reading and speech.

Then applications were filled out, checked by Mr. Brownstein, and when he got to Pam he said he would talk with us later.

Mr. Hal Kagan then spoke to us all about how to market the skills you would have upon completion of the course.

The seminar was over and Mr. Brownstein talked with Pam and me and said he didn't know how he could help Pam. He said he wanted to help her but didn't even know how she could take notes, and when she told him he wasn't even listening. He wanted to know of a half-

dozen successful blind persons working in this field. Pam and I could not give him any within the large Commercial Stations in the immediate area. He said he would discuss it all with the owner of the school and call Pam on Monday.

Monday he called Pam and said he hadn't forgotten her. He said he had talked with the owner of the school and she agreed with Mr. Brownstein that there was no way that a blind person could do anything in Radio.

On Thursday Pam and I went to the auditions early. Mr. Brownstein was very surprised to see us. Pam said she had come to audition. Mr. Brownstein said they were all down the hall taking Math Tests. Pam then asked if she could sit in on a class. That was very agreeable. We had a short discussion in the office, and were told again that there was no way the school could help her. We said goodbye but not before I told Mr. Brownstein that he had not seen the last of Pam.

The foregoing letter was written by Pam's mother. On October 3, 1980, Pam took her case to the Office of Human Rights, where she filed a formal complaint. Under date of November 22, 1980, David Stayer, who is the President of the Long Island Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of New York, wrote the following letter:

Dear Mr. Brownstein,

It has been brought to my attention that one of our Federationists has not been permitted to apply for training at your school. The reason given was that blind people could not do anything in Radio. However, there are blind persons employed as announcers, program directors, newscasters and disc jockeys throughout the country.

It is my opinion that an applicant who happens to be blind does not have to prove that she should be allowed to pursue training as an announcer. Any blind person applying for such training is only obligated to do her work as is any other applicant. Pamela Dillon has a knowledge of broadcasting and a relative who works for a radio station as an engineer. She was recommended to your school because of the excellence of the training given.

It is unfortunate that your attitudes about blindness have no relationship to reality. People who are black have had to deal with the same kind of bitter-

sweet approach: "I wish we could help you, but since we can't, I'll send you to an agency that specializes in you people." We people are as normal as you. We also deserve the chance to pass or fail on our own merit, despite your opinion.

We of the National Federation of the Blind are in the process of determining whether you are in violation of Sections 503 and 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act. If we find this is the case, we will take all necessary action to correct your flagrantly discriminatory position regarding Pamela Dillon's not being permitted to apply to Announcer Training Studios.

BLIND WOMAN GETS SEAT AS S.F. JUROR

by HARRY JUPITER

(From the *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 22, 1980)

The case was nothing special: A jury trial for a man charged with driving on the Bay Bridge while under the influence of alcohol.

The young juror in seat No. 4, however, was special. Renee Zelickson, 25, a senior art major at San Francisco State University, is blind.

"I was going to try and get out of serving because I'm a student," Zelickson said yesterday while waiting for the trial to begin before Municipal Court Judge Richard P. Figone. "And then I remembered how much effort it took before it was possible for blind people to be jurors. Some day this will be no big deal."

The law making it possible for blind persons to be jurors in California was passed in 1977. As far as anyone at City Hall could remember, Zelickson was the first blind person in San Francisco to serve as a juror.

Zelickson said that about five years ago, while living with her parents in Southern California, she was called for jury duty and was turned down because she was blind. It angered her.

"If every other citizen has the right," she said, "I should, too."

"She's got brains and she's got a lot of common sense," Judge Figone said. "It's no problem for me having her on the jury in this particular case."

"I was born totally blind," she said, "and then I had some limited vision for a while. I have no sight now in my right eye, a tiny bit in my left eye. I need a contrast to see something."

Zelickson doesn't consider her blindness a handicap. "I'm severely asthmatic," she said. "Now that is a problem."

NEW YORK CONVENTION

by ELLEN ROBERTSON

Our State Convention was held on October 10, 11, and 12 in Liberty, N.Y. Hosted by Sullivan County Chapter of the NFB, the theme of our convention was "Better Services for the Older Blind As Well As the Young." In accordance with this theme, we hosted speakers from private agencies which serve the elderly blind as well as a representative from the State Commission for the Blind.

Our representative from the National Office was Dick Edlund. He gave our banquet address and also spoke to our convention assembly.

We said farewell to our Second Vice-President David Walker who is taking a new position in Detroit, Michigan. We voted Orpha Farr in as our new Second

Vice-President. Mrs. Farr is the Secretary of our Syracuse Chapter.

Some time was spent in the discussion of much needed fundraising programs. We finalized plans for a Legislative Breakfast to be held in our state Capitol, Albany, in January of 1981. At this event we will meet with our legislators over breakfast and communicate the needs of the blind in this state. It is hoped that more legislation will be passed which will benefit many of our members in the areas of the minimum wage and jury service.

Our convention was informative and provided an opportunity for us to work together toward gaining full equal rights for all blind persons.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

by LUCILE HITT

LUCY'S SQUASH CAKE

(Note: This is a repeat of the November Recipe of the Month. Mrs. Hitt wrote to apologize for having omitted a key ingredient.)

Ingredients:

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 2 average size yellow squash | 1½ cups flour |
| 3 eggs | 1 teaspoon baking soda |
| 1 stick of margarine or | 1 teaspoon vanilla |
| ½ cup cooking oil | 1 teaspoon nutmeg |
| 1 cup sugar | 1 teaspoon spice |

Use blender if you have one for smooth texture. Cook at 350 degrees for about an hour. Bananas or zucchini can be substituted for squash.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

by HAZEL STALEY

ITALIAN ZUCCHINI CRESCENT PIE

Ingredients:

| | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 4 cups unpeeled zucchini, thinly sliced | ¼ tsp. garlic powder |
| 1 cup chopped onion | ¼ tsp. sweet basil |
| ½ cup butter | ¼ tsp. oregano |
| ½ cup chopped parsley or 2 tbsps. parsley flakes | 2 eggs, well beaten |
| ½ tsp. salt | 8 ounces shredded Mozzarella cheese |
| ½ tsp. pepper | 8 ounce can Pillsbury Crescent rolls |
| | 2 tps. prepared mustard |

Heat oven to 375 degrees. In ten-inch skillet cook zucchini, onion, and butter until tender (about ten minutes). Stir in parsley and seasonings.

In large bowl blend eggs and cheese. Stir in vegetable mixture.

Separate rolls into 8 triangles. Arrange in ten-inch pie pan or 12 by 8-inch pan. Press over bottom and up sides to form crust. Spread crust with mustard. Cover evenly with vegetable mixture. Bake 18 to 20 minutes or until knife inserted in center of pie comes out clean. Let stand ten minutes before serving.

MONITOR MINIATURES □ □ □ □ □

□ Karen Mayry, President, NFB of South Dakota, was appointed on September 23 to the South Dakota Special Education Advisory Board. This 9-member board will plan and evaluate programs for children needing special services—i.e. blind students both in public school and in the South Dakota School for the Visually Handicapped. The appointment is for a one-year term.

□ Noteworthy occurrence: Hazel Staley, a long-time leader of the blind of North Carolina, recently received an unusual tribute. The ACB in the state gave her an

award for outstanding service to the blind of North Carolina and for her leadership in improving the lives of the blind. When the ACB in a state gives public recognition to the constructive leadership of the NFB state president, it tells you a great deal, both about the NFB and the ACB. Hazel deserved the recognition. We commend the ACB of North Carolina on their good judgment in recognizing the excellence of the NFB and of Hazel Staley.

□ From Joe Fletcher, Hemet, California:

How do you build a strong local affiliate of the National Federation of the Blind? Take the word "mediocre," and use each

letter to begin a positive word: M—motivation, E—education, D—dedication, I—imagination, O—organization, C—communication, R—recognition, E—enthusiasm.

□ Mary Main (who is the energetic President of our Stamford, Connecticut Chapter) appeared on CBS television Sunday morning, October 12, 1980. The coverage was excellent. Mary Main is a credit to the blind and to our movement.

□ Gertrude Sitt is working as a Braille proofreader for Triformation Systems, producing books in Braille via computer processing. Gertrude is deeply in need of a used Optacon. She had one for five years, and had to give it up when she retired from Social Security. But she misses reading with it where necessary. Anyone having an Optacon for sale can contact Gertrude at: 1751 S.E. Jackson Street, Stuart, Florida 33494.

□ At the NFB of Wisconsin convention October 12, 1980, the following people were elected to office for two-year terms:

President: Sister Sue Micich, Oshkosh

First Vice President: Kathleen Sullivan, La Crosse

Second Vice President: Cindy Lien, Madison

Secretary: Bernadette Krajewski, La Crosse

Treasurer: Martin "Pete" Howe, Green Bay

Board Member: Howard Kaufman, Milwaukee

Board Member: Kathleen Crowley, Milwaukee

Hold over: Robert Raisbeck, Wausau

One-year Board Member: Mary Jeatran, Janesville

□ As is traditional, the Board of Directors of the National Federation of the Blind met at the National Headquarters during the Thanksgiving weekend. Sunday afternoon the members scattered to the various parts of the country heading for home. For most of the members the homeward trip was uneventful but not for Muzzy Marcelino. The nose wheel did not come down, and his plane crash-landed at the San Francisco airport. Fortunately Muzzy was not hurt. However, the airline followed its usual recent pattern. As Muzzy started to slide down the emergency chute, airline personnel confiscated his cane, telling him they would return it when he reached the ground. They didn't. Incredible though it seems, they had lost it. They gave Muzzy cab money home and told him they were sorry. Much good that did him. This proves what we have always said: In times of emergency airline personnel will first look out for themselves, and we must do the same. We must insist upon keeping our canes and must be prepared to fend for ourselves.

THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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